

# Abstract Form

Abstract is to be typed in a 10 point font/typeface (Times Roman preferred) and must fit in the space below; additional pages may not be submitted.

## FOR REVIEWER USE

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## FOR OFFICE USE

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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### TITLE:

Live & Then Give: A joint initiative by Texas Medical Association, TMA Alliance, TMA Foundation, and Texas Transplantation Society to increase organ donation

### DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY:

In 1986, Dr. Phil Berry received a life-saving liver transplant, so he knows first-hand the loneliness of being on the waiting list. When Dr. Berry became president of Texas Medical Association in 1997, he determined to do everything in his power to make a difference to the 57,000 other individuals who were still waiting. Live & Then Give was born out of that desire.

The campaign was designed to first reach the 35,000 Texas doctors and medical students who are members of Texas Medical Association with the message that organ donation is the right thing to do. Since physicians have a tremendous influence on their patients, who better to lead the way by signing donor cards, talking to their own family members about organ donation, and then talking to their patients? To assist them, we designed donor card brochures, posters, a 10-minute video, and published a series of magazine articles to drive the message home. We offered donor card brochures for the doctor's waiting room, and also provided novelties such as pens, bumper stickers, buttons, etc. A comprehensive manual was created with ideas for events and tips on media planning; these have been used by our county medical societies and alliance groups, to conduct health fairs, school events, and medical meetings. TMA has four meetings per year, attracting from several hundred to several thousand physicians, and we have had a Live & Then Give booth at each meeting.

During the second phase, we began focusing on the general public through video PSAs, print ads, and radio PSAs. Additionally, we worked with the Organ Procurement Organizations and the Texas Department of Public Safety to provide one million donor cards to be distributed in the driver's license stations. The cards have a peel-off "donor" sticker so that Texans can now indicate on their driver's licenses that they wish to be donors. Because of the overwhelmingly positive response, we are presently considering extending the campaign; new facets include concentrating on the physician audience by offering continuing education on organ donation and transplantation topics, as well as working with other allied health organizations in Texas. And the campaign is going national: the American Medical Association has resolved to create an organ donor campaign modeled after Live & Then Give.

### DESCRIPTION OF EVALUATION (if completed, provide results):

We began the year with two polls for benchmarking purposes. The public was surveyed on a Scripps-Howard Texas Poll; the results showed only 42% of Texans were pledged as organ donors. When those who said "no" were asked why, more than half of them said it was because they'd never thought about it. The physicians were surveyed in an in-house poll, showing 51% of Texas physicians and 49% of their spouses had made the decision to be organ donors.

Anecdotal evidence shows the program is meeting with great success; as more and more allied health groups hear about the message, more of them want to cooperate with TMA to spread the word. Dr. Berry has personally witnessed hundreds of fellow physicians signing donor cards, and has spoken at more than 50 medical meetings. When he can't be there in person, the video is shown and donor cards are distributed. To date, we have shipped more than 40,000 donor card brochures, most of them to physicians for their own use and to distribute through their offices.

In late January, a toll-free number for Live & Then Give was installed; we are receiving dozens of calls each week in response to the PSAs (currently the only published source for the phone number) and are tracking each call. Callers who request a donor card are mailed one, along with a letter from Dr. Berry. Callers with specific questions about organ donation are referred to their local organ procurement organization.

We have reaped a previously unanticipated benefit of the campaign in that it has drawn the Texas transplant community together in pursuit of the common goal of increasing organ donation.

At the end of April, the public and physician polls will be repeated to determine if awareness of organ donation has increased. The real proof of success, though, will be when organ donation rates begin to go up. Until the waiting list numbers diminish from the thousands to the hundreds, our job is not done.

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